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X-PECT THE UNX-PECTED...

PETER DAVID • RYAN SOOK

X-FACTOR

Calero • Von Crawbadger • Villarrubia



DIRECT EDITION

RATED T+



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IN A SOCIETY WHERE MUTANTS AND FORMER MUTANTS ALIKE FEEL THREATENED BY THE WORLD AROUND THEM, THEY TURN TO THEIR FIRST, BEST LINE OF DEFENSE. WHENEVER TROUBLE ARISES, X-FACTOR, THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY FOUNDED BY MADROX, THE MULTIPLE MAN.

X-FACTOR



X-FACTOR'S FORCES ARE SPREAD THIN. MADROX AND SIRYN, INVESTIGATING THE ALLEGATIONS THAT THEIR CLIENT, GLORIA SANTIAGO, MURDERED HER OWN SISTER, HAVE RUN INTO AN INFORMATIONAL STONE WALL. A WALL PUT UP BY DAMIAN TRYB, JUNIOR, VICE PRESIDENT AT SINGULARITY INVESTIGATIONS, WHO IS REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF JACK VAUGHN, THE MOVIE STAR WHO'D BEEN ROMANTICALLY INVOLVED WITH GLORIA'S SISTER AND SWEARS THAT SHE, GLORIA, IS THE ONE WHO PULLED THE TRIGGER.

MEANWHILE A MOB OF ANTI-MUTANT BIGOTS ARE RIOTING IN MUTANT TOWN, ATTACKING THE FORMER MUTANTS CURRENTLY RESIDING THERE. BUT THEIR ASSAULTS ARE CUT SHORT WHEN STRONG GUY AND WOLFSBANE STEP IN AND DRIVE THEM OUT OF MUTANT TOWN WITH A THREAT NEVER TO SET FOOT THERE AGAIN.

WHILE THAT'S HAPPENING, AN ASSASSIN WORKING FOR SINGULARITY INVESTIGATIONS TRICKS HIS WAY INTO X-FACTOR HEADQUARTERS WITH THE INTENTION OF BLOWING AWAY RICTOR. HE IS FATALLY THWARTED IN THE ATTEMPT BY LAYLA MILLER, WHO DEFTLY SETS A SERIES OF EVENTS INTO MOTION THAT CULMINATE IN THE ASSASSIN'S DEATH BY "ACCIDENTAL" ELECTROCUTION.

GOT ALL THAT? GOOD. LET'S ROCK...

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rrring

WILL
SOMEONE
ANSWER THE
BLASTED
PHONE?

LAYLA?
RICTOR?
ANYBODY?

OH
FOR...

rrring

rrri

HELLO,
NUTHOUSE.

NO,
MADROX ISN'T
HERE.

OH...THIS
IS MADROX.
LOUSY
CONNECTION,
SORRY.

ON SECOND THOUGHT,
I'M NOT SORRY. GET
YOUR BUTT BACK
HERE.

WE'VE HAD A
FLOOD, I PUNCHED
OUT RICTOR THE
PEEPING TOM, THE
LIGHTS WENT
OUT...

WAIT...THE
LIGHTS ARE BACK.
WELL, MOST OF
THEM...

OH.
ICK.
THERE
ALSO APPEARS
TO BE--

WHAT DO YOU
MEAN, "SHUT UP
AND LISTEN"?

I CAME
HERE TO HELP
BECAUSE I MISSED
NEW YORK, MADROX.
NOT TO BE BOSSED
AROUND BY--



MONET, WILL YOU FOR CRYING OUT LOUD LISTEN TO ME?

WHY DO WE NEED HER AGAIN?



TERRY, PLEASE...NOT BOTH OF YOU GIVING ME GRIEF, OKAY?

WHATEVER. JEEZ. I'D KILL FOR A CIGARETTE RIGHT NOW.



LISTEN, I NEED YOU TO COME MINDSCAN GLORIA SANTIAGO. WHATEVER HAPPENED, SHE'S BLOCKING IT.

MAYBE SHE KILLED HER SISTER, OR MAYBE SHE WAS SET UP.

YOU CAN FIND THAT OUT.

SO CUT THE PRIMA DONNA ACT AND GET TO THE POLICE STATION AT 65TH AND AMSTERDAM, OKAY?



OKAY, FINE, IT'S NOT AN ACT. NOW WILL YOU PLEASE--?

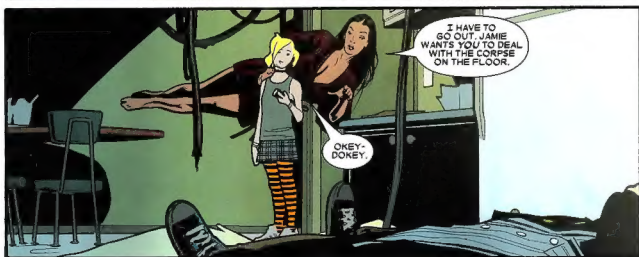
OH, THANK GOD. GOOD. HURRY UP.

NO, I DON'T CARE WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING. DON'T STOP FOR ANYTHING. JUST...JUST HAVE LAYLA DEAL WITH IT. SHE'S WEIRD, BUT SEEMS GOOD AT HANDLING STUFF.



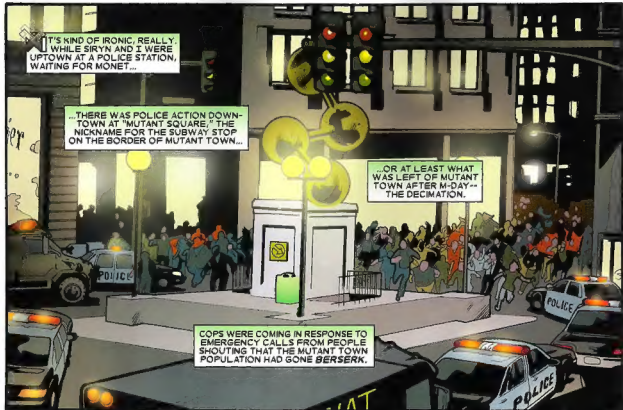
LAYLA!!

YES, MONET?



I HAVE TO GO OUT. JAMIE WANTS YOU TO DEAL WITH THE CORPSE ON THE FLOOR.

OKEY-DOKEY.



IT'S KIND OF IRONIC, REALLY. WHILE SIRYN AND I WERE UPTOWN AT A POLICE STATION, WAITING FOR MONET...

...THERE WAS POLICE ACTION DOWNTOWN AT "MUTANT SQUARE," THE NICKNAME FOR THE SUBWAY STOP ON THE BORDER OF MUTANT TOWN...

...OR AT LEAST WHAT WAS LEFT OF MUTANT TOWN AFTER MIDNIGHT... THE DECEMATION.

COPS WERE COMING IN RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY CALLS FROM PEOPLE SHOUTING THAT THE MUTANT TOWN POPULATION HAD GONE BERSERK.



NATURALLY THEY FAILED TO MENTION THAT THEY THEMSELVES WERE SO-CALLED "REALS"...

...DEDICATED TO TORMENTING THE NEWLY MINTED NON-MUTANTS OUT OF JEALOUSY, PETTINESS... WHATEVER.



HOWEVER, THEY'D ONLY MANAGED TO UNITE AN ALREADY FRACTURED AND DEVASTATED MUTANT TOWN AGAINST THEM.

SO NOW THE POLICE HAD BEEN SUMMONED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.



IMAGINE THEIR
SURPRISE...

...WHEN THE POLICE
WERE INFORMED OF THE
NEW STATUS QUO.

EVENING,
GENTLEMEN. WE'RE
FROM X-FACTOR. MY
CODE NAME IS "CAN
CRUSH YOU WITH A
GLANCE" MAN...

...AND
THIS IS MY
PARTNER. "ONCE
DISEMBOWELED A
FELLOW JUST TO
WATCH HIM DIE"
GIRL.

LET'S TAKE
TEN SECONDS TO
CONSIDER WHY WE'RE
CALLED THAT, AND WHAT
IT CAN MEAN FOR YOUR
LONG-TERM HEALTH
PROSPECTS.

LINES IN THE



SO...GUIDO
AND RAHNE ARE
IN THE MIDDLE OF
A RIOT?

AND YOU
JUST...JUST
FLEW BY?

THAT'S RIGHT.
BECAUSE MY BOSS
TOLD ME--



--NOT TO
STOP FOR
ANYTHING.

IF YOU'RE
THAT WORRIED,
JAMIE, YOU COULD
SEND A DUPE...A
DOZEN DUPES...
DOWN TO HELP.

YEAH, THERE'S A THOUGHT.
A DOZEN ASPECTS OF ME,
ARGUING WITH EACH OTHER, AND
ONE POSSIBLY HOMICIDAL VERSION
TO UP THE STAKES EVEN MORE.



I GOT
A BETTER
IDEA.



SEND
ME?
SEND
YOU.

BECAUSE
ONE THERESA
CASSIDY IS
WORTH--
--A
DOZEN JAMIE
MADROXES.



WHEN
YOU'RE RIGHT,
YOU'RE RIGHT.

I'VE GOT
MY CELL. YOU
NEED ME BACK
HERE, JUST
SCREAM.

I THOUGHT
THAT WAS MORE
YOUR THING,
DEAR.

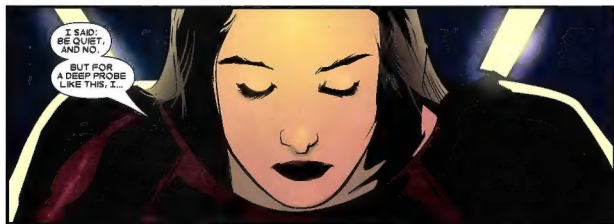
BITE
ME, ST.
CROIX.

AND
THAT'S RAHNE'S
THING.



WELL, I'M
SURE YOU'LL FIND
YOUR OWN THING
ONE OF THESE
DAYS.







HER BODY IS SHAKING. SHE SEEMS AFRAID... BUT I DON'T KNOW WHOSE FEAR IT IS, HERS OR GLORIA'S.

DESPITE MY BETTER JUDGMENT, I GO TO HER, TRYING TO PULL HER AWAY...



NOT ONE OF MY BETTER MOVES.



OOOOF!



IS THAT IT? IS THAT ALL YOU GOT???

AW, GREAT.

C'MON, "MY" BRING IT!

HEY! FIGHT CLUB! SHE'S ON OUR SIDE!



THE ONLY ONE ON OUR SIDE IS US... AND I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT YOU!

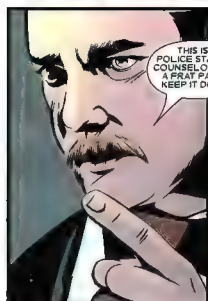
LETTING EVERYONE PUSH YOU AROUND WHILE YOU'RE AFRAID OF OFFENDING ANYONE!

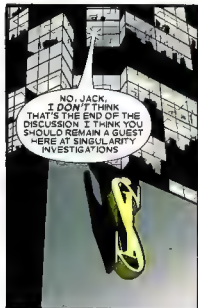
YOU'RE THE MOST POWERFUL MUTANT ALIVE, AND YOU ACT LIKE THE WEAKEST!

YOU MAKE ME SICK!



WHAT THE HELL'S HAPPENING IN HERE?!





NO, JACK.
I DON'T THINK
THAT'S THE END OF THE
DISCUSSION. I THINK YOU
SHOULD REMAIN A GUEST
HERE AT SINGULARITY
INVESTIGATIONS



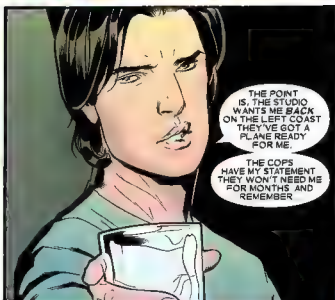
...AT LEAST
UNTIL THE SANTIAGO
WOMAN IS ARRAIGNED
WE CAN BEST PROTECT
YOU HERE

PROTECT ME
FROM WHAT? I'M
JACK FREAKIN' VAUGHN
I'M NUMBER THREE
ON PREMIERE'S TOP 'OO
MOST POWERFUL
PEOPLE IN
HOLLYWOOD



I'M IMPRESSED. I IMAGINE
IF YOU UNLEASHED THAT
POWER, YOU COULD TAKE
OUT SEVERAL CITY
BLOCKS

THE
POINT
IS



THE POINT
IS, THE STUDIO
WANTS ME BACK
ON THE LEFT COAST
THEY'VE GOT A
PLANE READY
FOR ME.

THE COPS
HAVE MY STATEMENT
THEY WON'T NEED ME
FOR MONTHS AND
REMEMBER



I'M THE
CUSTOMER
WHICH MEANS
I'M ALWAYS
RIGHT



IS THAT
SO? CONSIDER
THIS:

A THREE-
HUNDRED-POUND
WOMAN WEARING FLORAL
SPANDEX PANTS MUST HAVE
BELIEVED THEY LOOKED
GOOD ON HER WHEN SHE
BOUGHT THEM. HOW
RIGHT WAS THAT?



BON
VOYAGE
JACK



LOOK, FELLA,
YOU HAVE NO LEGAL
AUTHORITY HERE. WE
HAVE REPORTS OF
VIOLENCE..

AND IF YOU
TURN AROUND AND
DEPART NOW, WE CAN
LEAVE IT AT "REPORTS"
INSTEAD OF
EXPERIENCING IT
FIRSTHAND



THEY CAME
HERE, STARTED
TROUBLE, BEAT UP
OUR PEOPLE

THEY GOT
WHAT THEY DESERVED!
BUT IT ENDS HERE AND
NOW, WHETHER YE
LIKE IT OR NOT!



LOOK, LASSIE,
I'M NOT AFRAID
OF YOU OR YOUR
THREATS



WELL, MEBBE
AH CAN CHANGE
YUUR MIND!

RAHNE,
SIMMER
DOWN

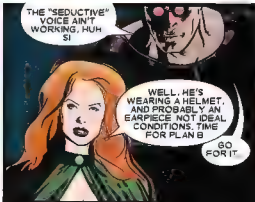
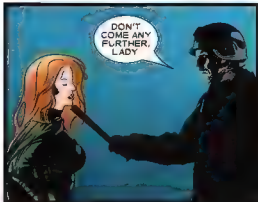


YOU BETTER
GET HER TO SIMMER
DOWN, FELLA! UNLESS
SHE'S BULLETPROOF,
SHE GETS A MUZZLE
ON PRONTO!

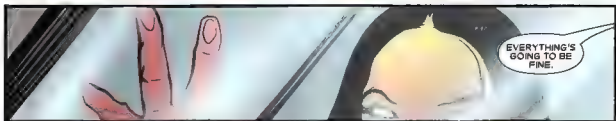
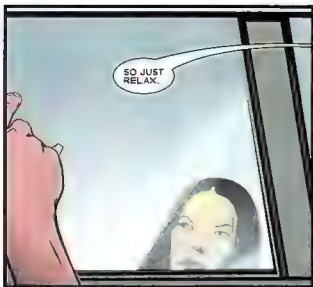
YOU DON'T
GET TO HAVE
YOUR OWN LITTLE
FIEFDOM.



YES
WE DO









OH, MISS
I COULD USE
A REFILL

YES I'M
SURE YOU
COULD



AFTER ALL,
KILLING PEOPLE
IS LIKE POTATO
CHIPS



IT'S SO
HARD TO STOP
WITH JUST
ONE



WH-WHAT'S
HAPPENING??
IT...YOU CAN'T
BE HERE!

WHERE
ELSE WOULD I
BE? HANGING OUT
WITH MY SISTER?
CAN'T SHE'S IN JAIL,
ACCUSED OF
MURDERING
ME...

BUT WE
KNOW BETTER.
DON'T WE,
JACK



WE KNOW
YOU LIKE TO PLAY
GAMES SOMETIMES
WAVE A GUN
AROUND...

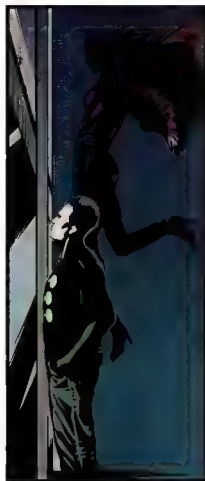
...MAKE LIKE
YOU'RE FORCING
YOURSELF ON
THE GIRL

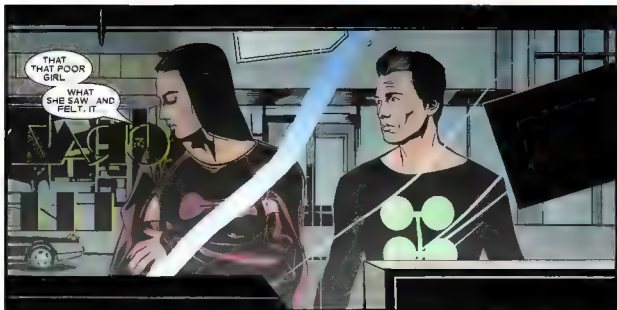
MAKE HER
BEG FOR HER
LIFE. ALL IN FUN,
OF COURSE.

BUT IT
WOULDN'T BE
ANY FUN IF THE GUN
WEREN'T LOADED,
RIGHT?









THAT
THAT POOR
GIRL

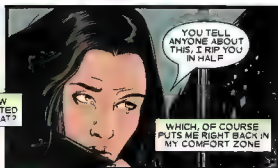
WHAT
SHE SAW AND
FELT, IT



I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO REACT
AT THE END OF WHAT FEELS LIKE
THE LONGEST NIGHT OF MY LIFE...

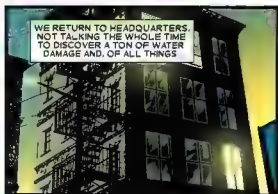
I REALIZE I FEEL
MORE AT EASE WITH
WOMEN WHEN THEY
ARE TRYING TO
BEAT ME UP THAN
WHEN THEY LET
DOWN THEIR GUARD

HOW
TWISTED
IS THAT?

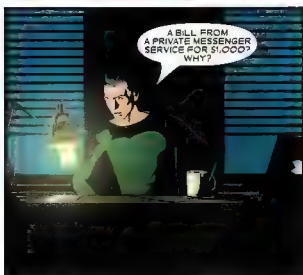


YOU TELL
ANYONE ABOUT
THIS, I RIP YOU
IN HALF

WHICH, OF COURSE
PUTS ME RIGHT BACK IN
MY COMFORT ZONE



WE RETURN TO HEADQUARTERS,
NOT TALKING THE WHOLE TIME
TO DISCOVER A TON OF WATER
DAMAGE AND, OF ALL THINGS

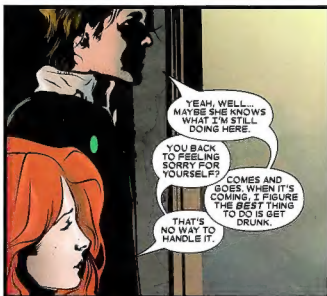
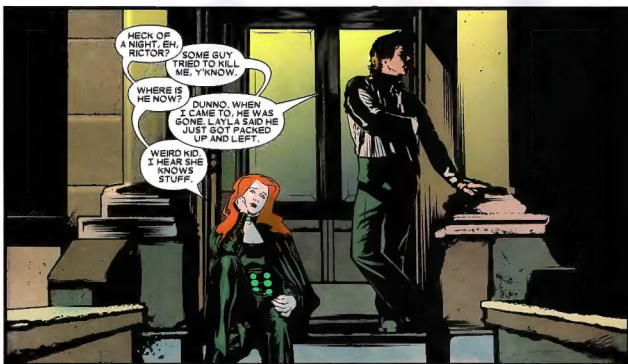


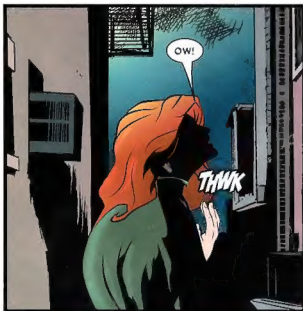
A BILL FROM
A PRIVATE MESSENGER
SERVICE FOR \$1,000?
WHY?



BECAUSE
THEY'LL GO
ANYWHERE AT
ANY TIME, AND
THEY DON'T ASK
QUESTIONS











X-FACTOR

Peter A. (stands for "Agog") David here, welcoming you to the lettercol of our fourth issue. And they said we wouldn't last! Both issues one and two sold out, which always leaves me with mixed feelings. On the one hand, it's great they were that popular. On the other, it indicates that retailers underestimated the demand. Remember, the best thing you can do to help your local comic shop is tell them, in advance, that you're going to be buying X-FACTOR and that they should order you a copy. Now let's jump to the letters which, as always, are edited for length but no meanings have been changed:

Hi Guys,

I was wondering if Pietro might be showing up here after SON OF M? Only, if the guys are investigating M-Day it makes sense their investigations would lead them to him, and Peter David wrote him so well on the original run.

So, I guess that's my one wish so far for this title, aside from a long and successful run, naturally!

Paul M Slattery

Funny you should ask: Yes. As of issue #7, the first cracks in the investigation of M-Day will occur and by issue #8 the arrival of Quicksilver completely blasts everything apart. Be sure to tell your retailer to order copies in advance.



Dear PAD,

Finally I got my hands on new X-FACTOR issues #1 and #2, and I have to say it's quite a good read. I bought the MADROX limited series because you wrote it and Rahne played a part in it. This new series is even better, because now we get Siryn and Rictor as well.

Monet is a negative factor, I mean does anybody exist who really likes that

girl?

Ryan Sook's artwork is great and your writing as always is top-notch. I hope we'll still see some of the funnier problems Jamie had with his duplicates in the mini-series, because some humor is always welcome. There is only one thing I didn't like much, the way Jamie introduced Siryn to Rictor, like he didn't know her at all. As mentioned above they have been teammates in X-Force for a couple of years. It's clear you only wanted to give us readers the insight on the character and her newfound ability—still, you could have made it in a more plausible way. Since this is my only complaint and I plan on buying the book for a long time, let me thank the whole creative team for their efforts.

Dieter Nagy
Mannheim, Germany

To be honest, Dieter, Madrox's dialogue in that sequence was written more for the first-time reader than it was for those familiar with the lengthy history of the characters' relations. Many people commented positively on how "accessible" issue #1 was to those who weren't longtime mutant fans. That accessibility came specifically from sequences such as the one you described. I figured that the new fans would be appreciative of having everything spelled out with minimal reference to historic details, and the long-time fans would come up with in-story explanations as to why things were written that way ("Clearly Madrox is starting to have short-term memory lapses; that could lead to something.") And by the way, I like Monet; if I didn't, she wouldn't be in the book. And speaking of Monet...

EDITOR'S NOTE: The MADROX trade paperback is on sale now!

I just want to say as a longtime fan of X-FACTOR, and its many incarnations over the years, I'm pretty interested

in this new direction. However, I have one gripe: Monet. I have known of this character since she was introduced and from my understanding she was a person of African (somewhere in there) descent, or a person of color. Where the heck is that shown in this comic? It seems as if the number of black characters is falling by the wayside. Anyhow, just an observation. Can't wait to see where this goes.

Sam Wilcox
Via Internet



Monet's skin tone, and what it should be, set off a flurry of researching into her history. And boy, it was confusing and rife with contradictions. Bottom line, although Monet has very dark skin, we're not entirely sure she's African-anything. Nevertheless, we're likely darkening her skin a bit.

Come back next issue to find out what fate has in store for X-FACTOR in "Captive Audience."

NEXT ISSUE:



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